

Home Group study: week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020

## **Flawed Heroes — Gideon Part 1**

Can you think of an occasion when you've suddenly had to do something unexpected and apparently beyond your ability? What happened and how did it work out?

**Read: Judges 6: 11-14, 25-31**

### **Discovery**

Why, in verse 11, is Gideon 'threshing wheat in a winepress'? What does the angel say to him and why does it seem so ludicrous?

What does Gideon ask the angel in v13? What do you think the answer would be?

We know that Gideon's family is into the worship of false gods. Yet he says: 'Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, "Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?"' What does that tell us about Gideon and his family?

Is Gideon's suggestion that 'the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian' a fair one? Why (or why not)?

In the second passage (vv25-31), Gideon steps out in faith. Is he now being 'a mighty warrior' do you think?

Why does God instruct Gideon to sacrifice a bull? (*Baal was sometimes depicted as a bull.*)

Why do you think Gideon's father, Joash, rejected calls for Gideon to be killed for breaking down his altar to Baal and cutting down his Asherah pole and burning it?

### **Understanding**

It's difficult sometimes to understand why the Israelites were more attracted by false gods than by the God who miraculously rescued them from slavery. Do you think they had forgotten all about those days? What does v13 tell us?

Tales of 'the old days' are still being passed on from generation to generation. It's around 275 years since Israel moved into the Promised Land, so this is like us looking back on events that took place in about 1745. How much might we be influenced by events that took place that long ago? (*A bit more context: George II was King, England had not long become united with Scotland, we were one of the wealthiest nations on earth and the slave trade was booming. Britain had 13 colonies in America, virtually the entire east coast, therefore most of the principal settlements, of what is now the USA. And John Wesley was in his prime.*)

For Gideon's generation, it's been a long time since the Exodus. But there are other factors at work. What does Judges 1: 27 tell us about Gideon's tribe, Manasseh? And just to remind ourselves (this came up in the notes three weeks ago but is important in our understanding) what light does Judges 2: 1-3 throw on the fact the Israelites keep turning away from God?

In perhaps an over-simplified statement, it was said on Sunday that between them Baal and Asherah represented money, sex and power. To what extent are those issues still a threat to the Christian today? Can these be seen as idolatry?

### **Application**

There seems to be an irony in Judges 6:12 about the angel addressing Gideon as he was hiding away from the Midianites as 'Mighty Warrior'. What does this say about the way God can use our lives?

Verse 12 also tells us that God is with Gideon. How can God be 'with' someone from such an ungodly background of worshipping false gods? Do you think in our generation God could use people with an occult background?

God doesn't reveal to Gideon (yet) how he is going to save Israel. Instead, what task does he give him to do (v25)? Why is this an important act before God reveals his plan to Gideon? What does that tell us about the way God wants to use us?

It's quite a big thing to go and destroy his father's altar. In that culture it would be highly offensive to his father (and remember how important respect to one's father would have been) and to the local community. What things might God call us to which would offend our society?

Gideon was obviously fearful, because he does this at night, hoping nobody will notice. What outcome would he be fearing? And what actually happens? Often we don't step out in faith because we are gripped by fear of the consequences or simply of the offence we might create. What does this passage tell us about those fears?

Pray for members of the group to be able and willing to be used by God to bring light in the darkness which has engulfed the world at this time.